



## **Envision Arlington Standing Committee Meeting Minutes**

Date: Thursday, May 14, 2020

Time: 7:30 PM

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

Present: Juli Brazile, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Sue Doctrow, Scott Lever, Kelly Lynema

Absent: Greg Christiana

Also Present: Michael Brownstein, Lenard Diggins, Elizabeth Dray, Katell Guellec, Gordon Jamieson, Amos Meeks, Brucie Moulton, Rajeev Soneja, David White

### 1. Introductions and Executive Order on Remote Participation

Juli Brazile opened the meeting by identifying herself and confirming that all meeting participants present could hear and be heard. Members of Envision Arlington's Task Groups were invited to update the Standing Committee on Task Group activities.

Juli explained that this Open Meeting was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus. And that in order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. The Order, which is posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting.

### 2. Approval February Minutes

Kelly Lynema moved to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2020 meeting, seconded by Sue Doctrow. A roll call vote was taken for those who were in attendance for that meeting. The minutes were approved by the Standing Committee members present at the February meeting.

### 3. Update: Task Groups

#### a. Reservoir Committee

David White provided an update on the Reservoir Committee, reporting that they had met remotely two weeks previously after missing regularly scheduled meetings due to the COVID-19 state of emergency. Committee volunteers are continuing work on the wildlife habitat garden and the Res has seen an increase in walking visitors. A new Reservoir brochure is being prepared, with printing to be funded by Envision Arlington.

#### b. Diversity Task Group (DTG)

Katell Guellec and Rajeev Soneja provided an update on the Diversity Task Group, reporting that they had met earlier in the week after missing their April meeting due to the COVID-19 state of emergency. They are currently transitioning to Co-Chairs for the Task Group following Michaiiah Healy's stepping down as Chair. The Group's recent

focus has been on education, working with the School Superintendent to develop guidelines for dealing with difficult diversity topics. Though a training session with an outside consultant had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 state of emergency, an intern has continued working on a project to catalog the unmarked graves of slaves in Arlington. The Group voted in support of a petition for further action and reforms in response to statements by Lt. Pedrini of the Arlington Police Department, collaborated with True Story Theater on two online outreach events and consulted with Jennifer Susse of the Arlington School Committee on a holiday calendar for the schools.

c. Fiscal Resources Task Group (FRTG)

Gordon Jamieson provided an update on the Fiscal Resources Task Group, reporting that they recently published an updated Town government primer, "The ABC's of Arlington Government" to the Town website and a new Citizen's Corner article in the Arlington Advocate on "What a Town Is." The Group worked with the Town Moderator to reorder Zoning Warrant Articles in Town Meeting and with Select Board Member Dan Dunn on removing the residential exemption for non-owner-occupied properties. As part of the Leadership Interviews series, the Group interviewed the Director of Planning & Community Development and School Department CFO. Kelly suggested Deputy Town Manager Sandy Pooler as a subject for an interview in the series. The Group is currently looking at new growth as an income factor in the Town Financial Plan.

d. Sustainable Arlington

Brucie Moulton and Amos Meeks provided an update on Sustainable Arlington, reporting that the Group is currently reviewing responses to the questions they supplied for this year's Envision Arlington Annual Town Survey. The Clean Energy Future Committee met in April, but missed the March meeting due to the COVID-19 state of emergency. The Committee's Warrant Article will likely not be considered until Town Meeting is convened for regular business in the fall. Sustainable Arlington is continuing its collaboration with True Story Theater for a "Protecting Pollinators" online event and with the Stratton School Green Team on using art to raise awareness of environmental issues.

e. Education Task Group

Scott Lever and Michael Brownstein provided an update on the Education Task Group, reporting that there hadn't been much recent activity. The Group's offers to provide themselves as a resource to create and fund collaboration projects with the School Committee and Administration have been met with no response. With the High School rebuild project being the focus of so much effort, the Group is looking to find a constructive role to play making an impact on some unmet need. Juli suggested looking for something outside the MSBA structure, like the Diversity Task Group has. Gordon suggested using an approach similar to FRTG's interviews with Principals of the Gibbs or Ottoson Middle Schools.

f. Governance Task Group

Lenard Diggins reported that the effort to hold Precinct Meetings in coordination with the elections and Town Meeting had fallen apart due to the COVID-19 state of emergency postponements. Kelly offered the possibility of scheduling the Meetings as public events via Zoom through the Town's accounts. Lenard agreed to reach out to the Precinct contacts before the Town Election to offer the option of holding online Precinct Meetings in advance of the June Town Meeting.

#### 4. Update: Town Survey

Juli reported that she has started contacting the groups that submitted survey questions with results and reports from the online survey. Juli and Kelly will continue working on the main report. The survey had the same number of responses as the previous year. The floor was opened for ideas to increase participation for next year. Elizabeth Dray suggested notices in school newsletters or offering the chance to win prizes provided by local businesses or the Arlington Chamber of Commerce. Lenard advised that the Town Counsel should be consulted about prizes beforehand and suggested Arlington Community Media (ACMi) as another resource for promoting survey participation.

Brucie suggested civic engagement classes through Arlington Community Education and the High School to stress the importance of public participation. Kelly suggested reducing the number of topics covered in the survey, making it faster and more focused. Gordon suggested promotions in the Arlington Advocate and cards at Town Day to promote the survey and increase public involvement in general. Kelly reported that she and the Town's Public Information Manager are looking for ways to increase subscriptions to the Town Notices. When the new Town website launches, a mailing is planned to encourage residents to subscribe.

#### 5. Update: Town Meeting Warrant Article

The Warrant Article to remove the remaining references to Vision 2020 and change the designation of the Town Goals to Value Statements was well received by the Select Board and is expected to come before Town Meeting in the fall.

#### 6. Discussion: Standing Committee role and leadership needs

Juli instigated a discussion on the future of the Committee (after her departure) to solicit the thoughts of the Task Group leadership. Discussion began with the questions, "What unifies EA's work and what are we good at?"

Gordon shared that people enjoy learning about the Town and adding value to it. Brucie shared that Task Groups are an ideal environment for newcomers to acquire knowledge from experienced members on how to be effective in the Town. Katell shared that EA provides accessible opportunities for people to plug in and work on specific projects that interest them. Rajeev shared that EA is an opportunity for individuals to reach out to larger groups of self-motivated people.

Scott suggested that a new Media Task Group could focus on digital engagement, seeing the expansion of local media as an opportunity to better engage the community. Kelly shared that the Town's online resources are currently stressed with the increased demands from COVID-19. Lenard suggested that ACMi should factor into any community media conversation. Gordon suggested that the 9 Town Goals (or Value Statements) could be featured in a seminar series, with leaders in each of the areas sharing their expertise.

#### 7. Vote: Spending requests

A motion was made by Kelly to approve expenses for recent governance projects: \$62 postage and \$42 printing & envelopes for Town Meeting candidate statement project and \$110 printing for the Candidates Night sign. The motion was seconded by Elisabeth and approved unanimously by Standing Committee members present.

#### 8. New Business

Juli reported that Sue had agreed to be the Committee's Publicity Coordinator. This role designates her as the contact for the Standing Committee and Task Groups with Kelly and the Public Information Manager to filter requests for events to include on the Town Notices and

other media. Still needed is a Treasurer to keep track of the Standing Committee budget and to pay out expenses to Task Groups.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 PM.

Submitted by  
*Elisabeth Carr-Jones*